



# NEWSLETTER

August 2020 Edition

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Welcome to the Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) August Newsletter!

## Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) Updates

### Feelings Thermometer – Take Your Emotional Temperature

As cases of COVID-19 continue to increase across the state and we are encouraged to stay safer at home, many are concerned about the challenges this creates for some families. As parents and kids work, learn, and now summer vacation from home, it can be emotionally stressful and exhausting.

First Lady Kathy Evers, in conjunction with OCMH, is launching a Feelings Thermometer. This is a tool that measures how you are doing emotionally and steps to take to shift your mood when it gets tough. The readings go from blue (the calm zone) all the way up to red (the furious zone) and lists suggested activities for each zone. Research tells us that just identifying a calming activity can work to reduce anxiety.

Post a copy of the Feelings Thermometer on your refrigerator and have the whole family take their emotional temperature several times a day to help stay in the happier blue zones.

### FEELINGS THERMOMETER



First Lady Mrs. Kathy Evers introduced the Feelings Thermometer via a [video message](#).

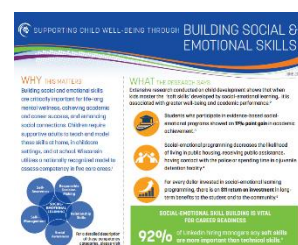
To get a copy of the Feelings Thermometer visit [www.children.wi.gov](http://www.children.wi.gov).

You can either:

Print a copy or order a magnetized version.

### OCMH Fact Sheets

OCMH releases Fact Sheets on various important topics relating to the well-being of youth in Wisconsin on a monthly basis. Fact Sheets offer up-to-date research and actionable suggestions for families, communities, and decision makers. Check them out on our [website](#).



## Second OCMH Youth Listening Session

Youth ages 13 – 26 are invited to participate in OCMH’s second virtual Youth Listening Session – **Thursday, August 27, 2020, 5:30 – 7:30 pm.** We are interested to hear your opinions on mental health issues.

[To register.](#)

# Youth Listening Session

**What Is The Youth Listening Session?**  
It is a Zoom call designed to hear about the experiences and opinions of youth. (ages 13 to 26)



**When Is It?**  
Thursday, August 27  
5:30pm to 7:30pm  
**Theme: Mental Health**  
in the Educational Environment  
**How Can I Join?**  
Click the RSVP below.

*Guess What? Attendees get a \$10 gift card!*

Wanna Help More? Post about us on social media! (Materials for posting below)

## Exploring Racial Equity

### Racial Equity – What can our role be?

So many people and organizations have been moved by recent events that have shone a spotlight on racial inequities. Many feel an urgency to take a stand and do something. But what is that “something”? What is our part in working to address current and historical wrongs?

At the Office of Children’s Mental Health (OCMH) we are asking ourselves these same questions. When the task is so big, identifying what one is already doing is a good place to start. Then build on it. Change often happens by taking many consecutive small steps and inviting others to come along.



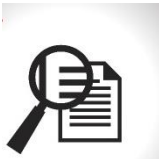
Towards that end, we want to share what we are doing in OCMH now on this important topic of racial equity. Our commitment is to build on these initial steps:

- Highlight racial disparities through research and data. Two of our 2020 Fact Sheets have tackled disparities in mental health and the bullying of black, non-Hispanic children (see our [Fact Sheets](#)). Our 2020 Annual Report will present the demographics of Wisconsin’s children via an equity lens.
- Commit to increasing diversity within our collective impact teams. Identify specific organizations or state agencies who serve people of color to assist us in this.
- Recognize and identify specific geographic areas where we could increase representation of our Lived Experience Partners.
- Recruit clinicians and youth of color to participate in our Listening Sessions.
- Co-creation of the Wisconsin Parent Leadership Collaborative to explore specific topics in relationship to leadership. The first topic is exploring how racial equity connects to family engagement. The goal of the collaborative is to take what is learned back to members’ individual organizations.
- Our team has made personal commitments to individual learning on this topic.

This is an important journey, and we encourage all to examine what they can do.

## Children's Mental Health in Professional Literature

OCMH Research Analyst Melissa Murphy spotlights new, open access articles about children's mental health.



**Addressing Racial Health Disparities in the COVID-19 Pandemic:** Immediate and Long-Term Policy Solutions. [Read the article.](#)

**Association of Outdoor Artificial Light at Night with Mental Disorders and Sleep Patterns** among US Adolescents. [Read the article.](#)

**Connecting the Brain to the Rest of the Body:** Early Childhood Development and Lifelong Health Are Deeply Intertwined. [Read the article.](#)

These and more articles are available on the [OCMH Website.](#)

## Legislative/Policy Update

**Federal Action related to COVID-19.** Congress continues to be at a standstill in terms of passing additional funds for individuals and providers coping with changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 25<sup>th</sup>, DHHS Secretary Azar [signed an extension of the public health emergency](#), thereby extending COVID-19 payment and regulatory flexibilities for up to 90 days.

**Medicaid Telehealth.** On July 31<sup>st</sup>, DHS held a session to gather input on its planned approach to significantly expanding Wisconsin Medicaid's permanent telehealth policy. More information and the slides from the listening session are available [online](#).

**Community Substance Abuse Service Standards** (DHS 75). In July, DHS issued a [draft revised rule](#) for public comment with the last of six listening sessions being held on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Under the draft, integrated outpatient behavioral health service programs may provide services for substance use, mental health, or co-occurring disorders under one single certification, removing the requirement for outpatient programs to be dually-certified in both DHS 35 and DHS 75. Stakeholders are currently invited to submit questions or comments regarding the economic impact of this proposed rule through August 26, 2020.

**Mental Health Workforce.** The Legislative & Policy Committee of the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health's subcommittee working on policy and application review issues related to the licensing of mental health professionals had an initial discussion with the Department of Safety and Professional Services on administrative barriers to licensure. A second meeting is planned for August.

**Statewide Mask Order.** [Governor Evers issued](#) Executive Order [#82](#) and Emergency Order [#1](#) declaring a public health emergency and requiring masks to be worn in all indoor settings. Currently, 61 of 72 counties representing 96 percent of the state's population are experiencing high COVID-19 activity. The Governor's order is effective until September 28<sup>th</sup>. A list of frequently asked questions regarding the mandate accompanied the order. Opposition from a number of Republican legislators emerged quickly with State Senate leadership declaring an intent to convene and overturn the order.

(continued)

## Of Interest

### August is National Immunization Awareness Month

National Immunization Awareness Month is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages families to talk to their doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professional to ensure everyone in their family is up-to-date on recommended vaccines. Regular connections with primary care providers creates more opportunities to talk about the social, emotional, and behavioral health of children. The CDC's [Interactive Vaccine Guide](#) provides information on the vaccines recommended during pregnancy and throughout a child's life.



**Wisconsin Fact:** Rates of children obtaining immunizations are down. In 2019, 69% of children ages 19-35 months received the recommended doses of immunizations, but in 2018 over 79% did.

### Behavioral Health during COVID-19 the Focus of a Federal Grant

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has been awarded a \$2 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) to support the state's health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding will support services offered by county and community agencies including services for people of all ages with mental health and substance use challenges and health care workers.

DHS is partnering with the following counties that were identified as having the greatest need for behavioral health services relative to COVID-19: Brown, Dane, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, and Waukesha. Additionally, Mental Health America of Wisconsin and Behavioral Consulting Services were awarded grants. [Read more.](#)

The Office of Children's Mental Health

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